

My name is Laurie Zoyiopoulos. I am a midwife in practice for over 21 years in rural northern Michigan. I have been a certified professional midwife (CPM) for 7 1/2 years. I have attended well over 1000 births and I attend approximately 60 Home births annually. Many of these births occur in counties without a hospital that provides obstetrical care. I drive on average 2100 miles every month providing prenatal and postpartum care, as well as home deliveries, in many counties where there isn't any one else providing much needed maternity services to pregnant women and their families.

Licensing midwives in other states has often increased the number of trained and competent midwives. This is something that would greatly benefit many Michigan families, especially in areas void of OB services.

The profession of midwifery needs the credibility of a license to encourage women to pursue it as a viable and sustainable career. Pregnant women and their families need safe and affordable care in their communities.

Another concern is that, without a license, CPMs have no way of providing proper care without another profession aiding us. I have to rely on a Physicians Assistant and OB doctors, in various locations, to order basic things like lab work and ultrasounds. It isn't that midwives don't know what ethical care and standard of care is, because our training insures that we do. It's that without, a license we have no authority to acquire this care, autonomously, for the women we serve.

As I sit in my hairdresser's chair, her license to do cosmetology is something I often notice. It has given her profession credibility, viability, and the people are ensured that she can safely do what she does. Because others see this as a respected profession, one that takes proper training and leaves you with a license to practice, they are drawn to this career path in ways that they would not be if a license wasn't needed.

There will always be families in this state who have their babies outside of the hospital, whether it's for religious, personal, or financial reasons, so it's our responsibility to make sure that they have access to midwives specifically trained in out-of-hospital maternity care. Families choosing to give birth at home deserve access to trained, credentialed midwives.

Thank you again, Rep. Franz, and members of the committee, for this opportunity to share my views. Please vote "Yes" on House Bill 4598 to help ensure that Michigan families have access to as many safe options for maternity care as possible.

Laurie Zoyiopoulos
Faithful Guardians Midwifery Service
8295 18 Mile Road
Marion, MI 49665
231-388-0981